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THE STATE UNIVERSITY AND RURAL SCHOOLS*

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THE functions of the university are now more numerous and more specific than ever. Its task is to seek out every opportunity of leading the way adequately and safely and with a high and noble civic ideal for doing everything which the State hopes to do for all the people within its borders. To help in making a larger provision for the adequate education of the country children becomes, therefore, a distinct field for university endeavor. And until this field has been entered and creditably developed the university is missing a promising opportunity for usefulness. Those who know the real conditions among the country schools do not have to be convinced of the need, or that improvement must come by a higher order of leadership, by effective instruction and training, and by inspiring wholesome ambitions and aspirations for public well-being in all its forms. And these are the purposes of the university. If they are to be realized the work of the university must be done well, first with its own students on the campus and then with the great body of people outside whom it was set up to serve.

Its activities, therefore, are confined to these two groups. Its primary functions are to instruct, to train and to inspire. These are the reasons for its being. And service is its object, whether the problem be one of scholarship and scientific research to be promoted within its own walls or of assisting an individual or a community in meeting some immediate practical need, such as planning for a better school system, organizing community-center activities, encouraging campaigns for health and community well-being and public welfare, stimulating movements for good roads, or promoting rural wholesomeness in other ways. Whatever the activity which the university engages in, the purpose should be the same, to instruct and to train leaders and to inspire with worthy and unselfish ambitions for the larger usefulness and happiness of the individual and for the greater service of the State. On the basis of this purpose all the activities of a university should be set up, and through this means they should function. The state university can serve, therefore, as an agency for the improvement of rural life and rural schools in two principal ways: first through appropriate instructions for its students, and second through extension activities, or direct service to the people of the State.

The instruction can be of two kinds, general and specific. The general courses are those which make no pretense at training for special rural service, but which should furnish correct views and sympathetic, interested and sane attitudes towards the rural problem. This can be done through history, economics, rural economics and sociology, public welfare courses, and courses in education and in other allied subjects. Unfortunately, however, instruction of this kind is too often neglected in our higher institutions and for that reason the ignorance of the average college or university graduate concerning rural conditions is easy to explain. He does not know anything about such conditions because he has not been taught anything about them. He has not formed the kind of attitude that he needs if he is to be helpful in promoting rural improvement, because he has not been properly directed. Certainly he does not usually get such an attitude in his college or university work. Can the university afford not to turn a due share of attention to this direction so as to help all students, whatever their prospective careers, to a proper understanding of those big problems which grow out of the confusion of country life and which are even now issues of national importance? Such service as this is general, but it can be given by every institution.

The specific service which the university can give is through a separate department of rural education. Its primary purpose is to train rural school and rural life leaders. These may be of several different kinds, depending naturally on the conditions in the State or community to be served. In the main, however, the demand is urgent now for trained county superintendents, supervisors, principals of rural consolidated and high schools, grade teachers, and teachers of agriculture, home economics and manual arts, community leaders, nurses and public welfare officers, directors of recreational activities, rural extension workers, rural community librarians, etc., etc. For all these people vital, intelligent, and thorough courses of instruction should be provided under the direction of well-trained, experienced and competent teachers and leaders, who are grounded not in theory alone but who know their respective fields first hand. Besides such instructional courses adequate provision should be made for field and experimental work.

The amount of this work to be undertaken by a given institution depends on the immediate and pros-

* Substance of an address at Berea College, Kentucky, May 10, 1920, on "How Can the State Universities Promote Rural School Progress?"

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intended that questions on entrance examination papers other than originals be chosen, and a list of subsidiary theorems. It is proposed to prepare a mimeographed edition of this list of propositions and constructions at the earliest possible moment for the benefit of such teachers as may desire to make use of it in connection with their classes during the coming year. A copy will be sent to any person interested upon application to the Chairman of the Committee (J. W. Young, Hanover, New Hampshire).

A preliminary draft on Mathematics in Experimental Schools was discussed at this meeting. Mr. Ralph Schorling of the Committee has spent over a year collecting material for this report, which will be ready for publication early next spring. It will be extensive and will describe in detail the work actually done in mathematics in experimental schools throughout the country.

Miss Vevia Blair of the Committee presented her report on the Present Status of Disciplinary Values in Education. It is expected that this report will be released for publication in October. It gives a critical review of the complete literature concerning the experimental work on the transfer of training as well as an evaluation of this literature terminating in the formulation of certain propositions concerning disciplinary values which appear justified by the experimental work. A particularly valuable feature of the report would seem to lie in the fact that a large majority of the most prominent psychologists in the country appear to be ready to subscribe to the propositions formulated.

A subcommittee under the chairmanship of Professor C. N. Moore is preparing a report on "Elective Courses in Mathematics in Secondary Schools." A committee under the chairmanship of Professor David Eugene Smith is preparing a report on "The Standardization of Terminology and Symbolism" and Professor R. C. Archibald is preparing one on "The Training of Teachers." It is expected that all three of these reports will be presented for the consideration of the National Committee in October.

The work of the National Committee and its recommendations were discussed in teachers' classes at the summer school sessions of colleges, universities and normal schools throughout the country. Present indications point to the fact that the work of the National Committee will have a prominent place on the programs of most teachers' organizations throughout the country during the coming year. The National

Committee stands ready as before to help in every possible way in the preparation of such programs and will be glad to furnish material for discussion.

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pective needs of the community to be served. Some institutions would do more, others less, than that suggested here. In most States the need is particularly urgent for trained county superintendents, supervisors of rural schools, principals of rural consolidated schools, and public welfare officers for rural communities. For in the duties required of these workers are the strategic points of rural education. And the success of their work depends on leadership, on training, and on vision.

The success of the instructional work in the departments of rural education depends on several factors. Adequate and sound courses are of importance. These must be thorough and foundational. Scholarship must be encouraged by precept and example. Faddists and fads should be discouraged and dismissed in matters so urgent as that of training leaders for rural service. In such enterprises there is no place for soft pedagogy or peripatetic professors-at-large who, sophist-like, talk with equal facility on either side of any question. Teachers in departments of rural education should be chosen for their sound learning and practical experience and first-hand knowledge of their work, rather than because they have run the stupid race for theory and the doctorate. Such teachers need also a wholesome and sympathetic attitude towards rural life and all its puzzling difficulties and conditions. Broad sympathy rather than a critical attitude is needed. Without these qualities teachers can not inspire confidence and respect of students, the administration, or the other departments of the university, or of the school workers of the State. And without this confidence the purpose of this work will be promptly defeated.

Sound scholarship, leadership, and competent instruction are as essential for those who train rural school workers as for those who train chemists, historians, or engineers. Moreover, these qualities are necessary if there is to be induced and cultivated in the university itself that attitude which is now so much needed for the encouragement of interest in rural life. Generally speaking, schools of education and professors of education have not been cordially received by other departments and other interests in

the universities or colleges. They have had to demand position and recognition. The indifference or hostility to them and their work, however, they themselves are often in large measure responsible for. Professional pedagogues have sometimes, unconsciously perhaps, given to professional training the unfortunate color of finality and the veneer of completeness. This is due no doubt to the tendency to theorize and to furnish prospective teachers a few mechanical laws and what is substantially a vocabulary of educational cant. The result is inevitable,—an artificial and stifling and formalized atmosphere which invites the disdain of colleagues, repels the interests of students, awakens impatience among the laity, and forces apology from well meaning men and women who are not professors of education merely, but skillful teachers, sound scholars, and inspiring leaders as well. And these are the kind of workers which the university can and should train, if it will, for rural service—skillful teachers, sound scholars, and inspiring leaders. The appeal, therefore, is for the attention of the university to be turned seriously to this big task, and to meet the challenge with courage. To this end the specialized work of instruction in rural education should be closely co-ordinated with all other departments and agencies of the university. Such co-ordination stimulates reciprocal and sympathetic interdepartmental relations and interests and promotes a wholesome community attitude toward the principal objective of university endeavor.

Local field activities through model schools of the university or public schools near by are very essential. These afford the students a type of work that is laboratory in its character and therefore very necessary. In addition to the work inside the institution, extension activities and work away from the university constitute the other principal means through which the university can help promote rural school improvement. These activities may take a variety of forms. Chief among the usual kinds are appropriate lectures, assistance through visitation, through investigations, surveys and the publication for popular distribution and use of studies on particular subjects dealing with the rural school and rural life generally. Illustrated lectures on consolidation and transportation prove the most effective single means of stimulating interest in this subject. They are of immense value also in helping to inform the public; and keeping the public properly and safely informed is fundamental and is essentially a very important step towards rural improvement. Through such activities as these, promising young people may be discovered, secured, and trained for leadership and service in this field. Allied to this means, of course, is the service which may be given

not only through discovering and training such workers, but also through the location of, following up, assisting, directing, and otherwise keeping points of contact with them. This is of great importance and calls for the organization of an appointment bureau for the graduates of the institution and for others who may be thus served.

Connections can be made with other state activities and agencies for public welfare. The cause can be promoted co-operatively, through practical surveys, and through publicity and propaganda. Still another important extension activity is to be found in the collection of trustworthy data dealing with rural life and education. These can be classified and made accessible for students in the institution and for use as loans to teachers, school officials and others interested. This part of the work is basic in any safe study of the subject, and it is surprising how great is the demand for such materials once they are made accessible.

The rural school problem in the South is acute. To the university it constitutes a strong challenge, an insistent appeal, and an opportunity for rare leadership. And the university's faith in the masses of the people and its interest in their needs are to be measured and tested by the qualities of patriotic service, resourcefulness and leadership which it displays in practical and useful ways in the promotion of rural betterment.

TEACHERS' ASSEMBLY

THE North Carolina Teachers' Assembly will meet in Asheville during Thanksgiving week. The program will center around the Report of the Educational Commission which Dr. Frank P. Bachman promises will be ready for distribution at that time.

The new form of organization for the conduct of business goes into effect at this time. Only duly certified delegates of local organizations will be allowed to vote in the business meetings. It is imperative, therefore, that the local units perfect their organization and send to A. T. Allen, secretary, the necessary information about their authorized delegates. This information is to be furnished on special forms which can be secured from Mr. Allen and must be in his hands by November 10th at the latest.

Perfect your local organizations at once—not only in order to be able to express your opinion in the business meeting in a very tangible way but also because the treasury of the Teachers' Assembly needs your financial support.

Be sure and be ready for this meeting and be sure to attend. Educational history is now in the making in North Carolina. Do your part.